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NEWS OF PLAYS AND PLAYERS

Geraldine Farrar's "Joan" Comes to 44th St. on December 25

"Joan of Arc" with none other than Geraldine Farrar in the title role, will begin an engagement at the Forty-fourth Street Theatre on December 25. This is a film, in dozen reels or thereabouts, and is regarded as so valuable a property that detectives have been guarding it constantly since its arrival in New York. Late last night, however, the publicity department regretted to report that no attempt had been made to abduct it.

"Flora Bella," will now at the Forty-fourth Street, will depart on December 26.

"Joan of Arc" will be performed three times by the Fortieth Street players at the Thirty-ninth Street this week, instead of once, as originally announced. The new programme, consisting of "The Golden Door," "The Man Who Loved the Weeping Willow Tree" and "The Very Naked Boy," will be seen this afternoon and last week's bill will be played at the matinees to-morrow, Thursday and Friday.

Thomas H. Ince yesterday cleared up a confusing political situation by admitting that his film "Civilization" was responsible for the redaction of President Wilson. Not only that, but arrangements are being made to exhibit the picture to the Kaiser, and Mr. Ince is confident that Germany will sue for peace immediately thereafter. So far as is known, however, "Civilization" had nothing to do with the Second Punic War or the Dred Scott decision.

The opening of "Margery Daw" at the Princess has been deferred until December 16.

The Metro Pictures Corporation decided that Elstree Harrymore had permanently abandoned the stage in favor of the films. Early in the season Miss Harrymore was considering a comedy by Somerset Maugham, and more recently Oliver Morosco has been endeavoring to secure her services for his forthcoming production of "The Songbird."

"Flora Bella," still another by Lee Wilton Dodd, will go into rehearsal

Victim Dies As His Hand Clutches Revolver Hidden in Pocket

Biagio Petronaci, lessee of a dozen big East Side tenements, went on a rent collecting expedition yesterday. In mid-afternoon he called on Charles Villa, who occupies three rooms in the rear of the ground floor at 341 East 105th Street.

From Villa, after hot words had been exchanged, the landlord got payment in lead spit from the tenant's revolver. The bullet entered Petronaci's left eye and penetrated his brain, killing him instantly.

Villa escaped over the roofs. His wife, after first denying she had witnessed the shooting, told detectives of the 3rd Branch Bureau that her husband had refused to pay rent until certain repairs had been made.

Petronaci reached in his pocket, she said. "My husband, thinking he was going to be shot, drew his own gun and opened fire."

The landlord's hand was still in his pocket when the police turned over the body. It clutched the butt of a revolver.

U. S. TO INVESTIGATE LOAN AGENCY FORTUNE

Seeks to Learn How Mrs. C. M. French Obtains Income

Chicago, Dec. 3.—An investigation by the Federal government to learn whether the fortune of Mrs. C. M. French, nominal head of a great chain of loan agency offices, has been built up through any violations of the postal or interstate commerce laws is to be begun. Agents of the Department of Justice will go to Reedsburg, Wis., according to C. F. Clyne, United States Attorney, and, if possible, will question Mrs. French to-morrow.

Mrs. French is the mother of Frank J. Mackey, socially prominent man here and in Europe, polo player and with having been the companion of King Edward VII on several occasions.

Attention to the French fortune was drawn by Judge Landis in the examination of several persons whose inability to keep up interest charges had brought them to bankruptcy. Salient loan agents set to figuring under Landis' eye revealed that interest charges sometimes ran into 200 or 300 per cent.

Butcher Dies of Cleaver Wound

Emil Oppenheim, butcher, of 28th Broadway, who was struck on the head by a cleaver in the hands of James Woods, negro employee, died yesterday noon at Knickerbocker Hospital.

The police are still hunting for Woods, who assaulted his employer when he was informed that hereafter his salary would be cut down.

Benefit for Carmelite Fathers

A benefit performance for the Carmelite Fathers and Sisters of Mercy will be given at the Lyceum Theatre on the afternoon of Monday, December 18. The attraction will be Mrs. Fiske and her company in "Erstwhile Susan."

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CASTOR OIL AND ART MADE EASY

Trick of Not Letting the Public Know What It Takes

"THE CENTURY GIRL" AND ITS BEAUTY

Urban Makes Good Use of Vast Spaces of the Huge Stage

By HEYWOOD BROUN

Art is like castor oil. Folk who can't stand it straight won't even make a face if it is ingeniously mixed with sarsaparilla. Thus, there is bound to be a greater demand for the wares of Dillingham and Ziegfeld than for those of Winthrop Ames. A beautiful set by Joseph Urban is none the less beautiful because you have to look around Marjorie Cassidy to see it, nor do the antics of Harry Kelly rob a backdrop of its glory. Painting the lily may be poor business, but Ziegfeld and Dillingham can crowd some mighty fine mural decorations on a stick. "The Century Girl" achieves the rare feat of making the beautiful popular.

Sometimes we could wish that Urban would stick a little more closely to his oil and let somebody else supply the sarsaparilla. For instance, his mans one of his best sets the celestial staircase by jamming a couple of bunches of purple flowers into a design otherwise severely simple. Yet, on the whole, Urban's fondness for overelaboration is allowed less play than in most of recent work. He has built a number of scenes, of hang and puts his faith in a drop or cyclorama, and his faith is not misplaced. With great skill he has allowed himself of the full depth of the stage, and the finale of Act II is an enormously effective stage picture.

Once, at least, he has given the costumes a full chance by setting them against a plain black background. These are the costumes for the "Alice in Wonderland" number, and they are enough to come through. The Longue Restaurant drop for Maurice and Walton is also by Urban but must have dashed it off during an hour set apart for rest and recreation.

However, that does not matter much. "The Century Girl" is a beautiful show, both in setting and costuming. Anybody who can look back to the days when the notion of a smashing effect was to set electric light bulbs in hats of the chorus girls should pray that by the day of the premiere it will contain more things than a Richard Walton Tully drama.

EAST SIDE VILLA SHOOTS LANDLORD WHO SEEKS RENT

Julia Arthur's prospective production of "Serendipity" has been enriched by the addition of a magician and a dancing team, and the estimate is made that by the day of the premiere it will contain more things than a Richard Walton Tully drama.

BERNHARDT, HERE, PUTS RUMANIANS ABOVE HER ILLS

"Heart Aches for Them," Actress Says. Hoping To Be Able to Play To-night

"How is the war going? Are the Rumanians still holding their own?" Bucharest hasn't fallen yet, has it?" were a few of the questions Mme. Sarah Bernhardt hurled at newspaper men gathered to welcome her last night.

"My heart aches for the poor Rumanians as much as if they were my own people," she went on. "They have been so strong, so brave, that I hope they will be able to withstand the furious German attacks. Those Rumanian women are a queer lot. They hide their faces a method about as effectual as the ostrich's."

Aside from Miss Ulrich's costume

"The Road to Love" is a stormy road, if one may judge from the way it is portrayed at the Strand, with Lenore Ulrich in the leading role. It leads across deserts, into harem, Turkish dance halls and the marriage mart.

If "The Road to Love" proves anything it is that Lenore Ulrich is an extremely sturdy young person. Her costumes leave little to the imagination. Those Algerian women are a queer lot. They hide their faces a method about as effectual as the ostrich's."

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